



**League of Women Voters
of the
Mid-Hudson Region**

**49th Annual Meeting
May 20, 2009**

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

**The League of Women Voters of Mid-Hudson Region
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Attachments:

Signup Sheet

Membership List

Congratulations to our Susan B. Anthony Honorees:

Cindy Bell

LeeCane

Tom Kadgen

Gloria Plasker

Renee Sachs

Be there to celebrate their achievements June 7 at Wiltwyck

Annual Meeting Agenda

Welcome	Jean McGarry
Dinner	<i>Enjoy!</i>
Call to Order	Jean McGarry
Appointment of Secretary for the meeting	Jean McGarry
Treasurer's Report and Presentation of 2009-2010 Budget	Dare Thompson
Review and Q&A of annual committee reports and results of local studies	Everyone
Signup sheets filled and collected	Lee Ridgway
Presentation of Local Proposal: How would consolidation of local government units and services achieve increased local efficiencies and effectiveness?	Margaret Sellers
Discussion and vote on proposal	Jean McGarry
Presentation of Nominations	Renee Sachs
Election of Officers and Nominating Committee	Jean McGarry
Recognition	Jean McGarry
Adjournment	

President's Annual Report

I am so proud of our local league. While last year the focus was change and transition, this year we saw the fruits of our labor. It was the year of implementation and so much was successfully accomplished.

The new charter form of government is up and running. Prior to its effective date in January, our league held informational meetings to keep the public abreast on the charter transition progress. With the campaigns of the first county executive and comptroller, our league throughout the county sponsored numerous candidates' forums. With a new government in place, our Observer Corps has expanded and has been vigilant in attending county meetings to report on the workings of this new government in its infant stages.

Implemented for the first time this year was the reorganization of our local league board in an effort to become more flexible and "user friendly." Initial concerns of it not allowing for enough accountability have not been founded. Instead, we have a very fluid operation that is more accommodating to members' interests and schedules.

Another huge change this year was ending the publishing of the Commentator as we knew it. As with so many organizations, we had to make hard choices in a difficult fiscal landscape. Sending out the newsletter by e-mail has allowed us to drastically cut our printing and mailing costs while freeing up members from the need to secure ads to fund the Commentator.

Last but not least, our first Susan B. Anthony honoree luncheon was a huge success and memorial occasion as we thanked longtime members Elizabeth Askue, Emily Johnson and Shirley Kobran for their years of dedication to the league. In June, we will hold a second Susan B. Anthony honoree luncheon to celebrate our new county charter as well as to recognize Lee Cane, Cindy Bell, Tom Kadgen and Renee Sachs who were so instrumental in working toward its passage. Past president Gloria Plasker will also receive a lifetime achievement award.

The challenges presented to our league and to our community seem never ending and sometimes overwhelming. It is good to step back and remind ourselves of all that we can do working together. It has been an historical and gratifying year. Congratulations.

Jean McGarry

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR YEAR JUNE 1, 2009-MAY 31, 2010

	Totals for 2007-08	Totals for Current Year	2008-2009 Budget	BUDGET 2009-2010
<i>Income</i>				
Individual Dues	2925	1430	4000	3050
Household Dues	755	675	1350	1200
Interest	175	131	150	120
Contributions	2735	1620	2000	1000
Fundraising	4549	2727	2000	3500
Ads/Sponsorships	1425	500	1000	750
Voter Service	590	230	700	450
<i>From Education Fund</i>	2918	2979	1000	2000
TOTAL	16072	10292	12200	12070
<i>Expenses</i>				
Operations	459	561	900	800
Phone/Web	445	476	600	600
Organizational Activities	219	403	500	418
Education Activities	164	3179	1880	1980
Public Programs	0	52	220	250
Delegates	0	0	400	500
Commentator printing	3554	493	1500	600
Commentator mailing	570	232	800	310
LWVNYS	1845	1800	1900	1530
LWVUS	3319	2719	3000	2482
Fundraising	3301	598	500	2600
TOTAL	13876	10513	12200	12070
Surplus/Deficit	2196	-221	0	0

The actuals figures are as of May 15, and do not represent final totals for the fiscal year.

The Finance/Development Committee Annual Report 2008-9

The Committee reviewed LWVMHR spending at least quarterly or more often as needed. They found that with substantial spending reductions, mainly in *Commentator* printing, that the finances were good, albeit, not as healthy as last year. The Great Recession and a decline in membership is leading to a shortfall of revenue. We still have a very healthy fund balance, but increasing membership is the most important way we can improve our finances. Our time is our greatest gift.

The Committee sponsored the Yard Sale at Emilie Hauser's house in August. This sale was much smaller than past sales, but still raised over \$1000. Thanks to all who contributed time and/or salable items and especially to Emilie for housing the sale and working so hard for it. And she's doing it again this year!

The Committee sponsors the Annual Appeal in January and February. This year a total of \$3080 was raised with \$2085 going to the Education Fund. Education fund money is tax deductible, but the LWVMHR is able to use it for educational and informational purposes, so it serves us well.

The Committee also sponsors the Annual Susan B. Anthony Luncheon. Last June, our first luncheon was held at Wiltwyck Golf Club with about 120 people attending. Honorees included Past Presidents Elizabeth Askue, Emily Johnson, and Shirley Kobran. This year's luncheon on June 7 at Wiltwyck will honor the new Ulster County Charter and those members who worked to develop and pass the Charter. They include: Cynthia Bell, Lenore Cane, Thomas Kadgen and Renee Sachs. Gloria Plasker will receive a Life Time Achievement Award. An opportunity is given for donations above the ticket price.

Margaret Sellers, Finance Director

Yard Sale Reminder:

The Yard Sale is a good time to see people, to acquire things you need, and to help yourselves and the League by donating things you don't need. August 29 and 30 at Emilie Hauser's. Last year we collected a little over \$1000. Can we do better this year?-

Voter Service Annual Report

After several intense years of study, action and citizen education, we have our first County Executive, Comptroller and Charter Government. While that hasn't done much to balance the Federal budget or stop the threat of swine flu pandemic, it has indeed begun to work minor magic with local governmental accountability, improved communications in and outside the county and the beginning of a positive journey into the future. We sponsored Candidate Forums and Charter Education panels, registered voters and distributed 8,500 Facts for Voters last autumn and I again wish to express my deep appreciation for those who gave so unselfishly of their time and talents, both within the League and without.

After a collective sigh of relief, the good people of the Voter Service Committee have once again taken their place among folks with a little free time. Still committed to encouraging all citizens to get out and participate in their government, we have also moved into the area of observing changes to see where we are now and where we might be of service in times ahead. Moderating continues to be in demand in the spring for School Board events and in the fall for Political Candidate Forums. If you have an hour or two a month to work with the Observer Corps, contact Margaret Sellers at MCSellers@aol.com. For other Voter Service activities contact me at CBell1000@aol.com.

Cindy Bell, Voter Service Director

Observer Corps

The Observer Corps has been working with renewed energy this year following up on the implementation of the Ulster County Charter, and planning to expand to cover the City of Kingston and the Town of Ulster. The Corps attends meetings of the Ulster County Legislature on a regular basis and reports on those meetings in the Commentator. The reports are short summaries of what was said and done at the meetings. They try to exclude any opinions of the Observer. We think that our presence at meetings makes the legislators more aware of the public even though we do not generally actively participate, then only when asked.

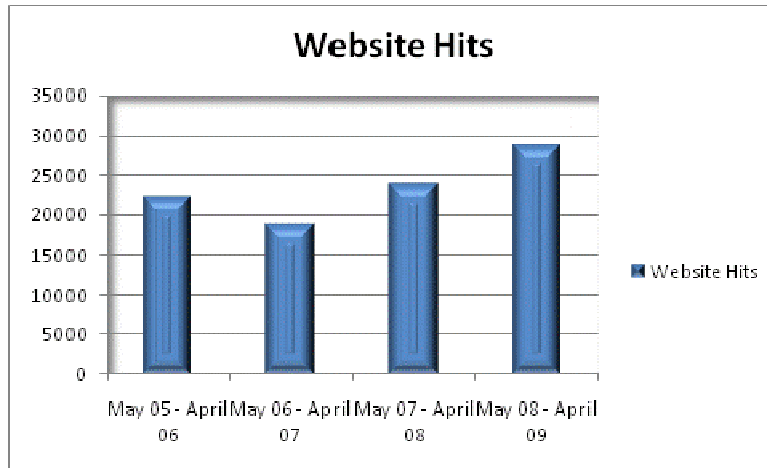
The Observers meet regularly once a month to discuss what they have learned and share their thoughts and opinions with other Observers. Over time we will be in a position to talk to our elected officials about what we have noted and to develop areas for further study.

We are interested in expanding our coverage to the City of Kingston, the Town of Ulster and other Towns, and the meetings of the Town Supervisors. All League members are encouraged to join us in this effort.

Margaret Sellers

Commentator and Website Report

Our website has continued to be a valuable resource for our members and friends. Despite a noticeable dip in “hits” in our second year, the number of visitors has grown steadily in our third and fourth years to an all-time high. Commentator hits have averaged over 300 per month and have, of course, contributed to our “traffic” but our Calendar and efforts to publicize the Ulster County Charter, local elections and Observer Corp activities have been significant drawing points.



We mark the first full year of distribution of the Commentator primarily by e-mail. By e-mailing to 68 members and 124 government officials we’re saving over \$2,300 per year. If all switched to e-mail delivery an additional \$500.00 could be saved. We’re continuing to send the Commentator to libraries and news outlets via postal delivery costing us about \$420. We are hoping to compile valid e-mail addresses for the media during the coming year to save an additional \$170 and to add more media outlets at no cost. With postage and printing costs always rising postal delivery will become a luxury.

Electronic delivery has been fast, convenient, cheap, versatile, AND GREEN! Even our oldest on-line Commentators continue to be read... logging over 4163 hits to date for issues from April through December 2005.

Future plans for the site include a more user friendly and extensive array of government and non-partisan website links for our visitors. Although much of what is planned can be found through our links to the National and State websites many users find it tedious to be continually clicking and searching their way through one link after another. We’ll try to bring the most useful websites to the top of the heap. Another area for our attention is the Voter Service pages. The League provides substantial services to various community organizations but we have little guidance and other such information on our website available for public perusal.

Jim McGarry

Membership Report May 2009

Membership is open to any person who subscribes to the purpose and principles of the League of Women Voters. The LWV of New York is committed to diversity, recognizing that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making in a democracy.

The League of Women Voters, founded in 1919, is a nonpartisan volunteer organization which encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

What can you do more easily as a League member?

STAY INFORMED ABOUT ISSUES AND GOVERNMENT, and about decisions that directly affect you and your community. The LWV gathers and reports facts.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD as an advocate for change and community problem solving. The League studies issues and advocates where appropriate.

SHARPEN YOUR SKILLS in leadership, communications, networking, public speaking and more, as you organize and act on local and national issues.

IT'S YOUR DECISION HOW INVOLVED YOU WANT TO BE. And whatever you decide, your membership gives the League the political clout we need to be a voice for citizens and a force *for* change.

THE LEAGUE

- Sponsors candidate debates
- Provides a telephone information service for voters
- Conducts voter-registration drives
- Provides speakers on the political process and public issues
- Advocates for change in public policy based on research and study

You'll enjoy it and feel part of something important for our future.
Betty Chin, membership chairperson

Don't forget to pay your dues. You can pay them through the LWWNYS Education Fund and they can be used for education and information, but not advocacy. That still covers most of what we do. If money goes to the Education Fund, it is tax-deductible. Contributions are also welcome!

Local Study Groups

The Future of Golden Hill

At the present time, it would appear that the fiscal viability of Golden Hill Health Care Center is assured for 2009 and possibly 2010.

The long term future of the Golden Hill Health Care Center depends on the level of support provided by the county, state and federal governments.

Golden Hill is noted for its level of excellence of care. However, Ulster County cannot continue to support multi-million dollar deficits in order to continue to operate the Golden Hill Health Care Center. Ulster County citizens must be willing to accept increased taxation or a reduction of other county services or a combination of both for Ulster County to continue to operate the Golden Hill Health Care Center.

Charter Transition and Support Committee

Most of 2008 was spent at the Legislature's library on the 6th floor of the County Office Building observing meetings of the Legislature's Charter Transition Team chaired by Gary Bischoff. The team consisted of some members of the former Charter Commission and members of the Legislature. Their charge was to produce an Administrative Code. Bea Havranek, (who was Assistant County Attorney at that time), and her staff had the Herculean task of codifying the laws that would govern the daily operation of Ulster County under the new Charter. The LWV had at least one member observing each meeting.

Before the campaigns for the newly created offices of County Executive and County Comptroller got underway the League Committee had formulated its plans to sponsor a series of informational meetings as well as a series of Candidates Nights to be held in various locales around the county. Participants from both parties of the Legislature were enlisted and the candidates themselves were notified. The LWV team also made plans to publish another trifold brochure and flyers and the distribution plans were laid out. A series of letters to local publications was part of the strategy. Included also was an appeal to various sources to cover some of the costs of printing. We were fortunate enough to obtain financial assistance from Ulster Savings Bank for our trifold brochure.

The League is planning a series of interviews with legislative party officials as well as the newly elected Executive and Comptroller to assess the state of government under the new charter. We would like to offer them a little breathing space first.

Renee Sachs

Proposed Study:

How would consolidation of local government units and services achieve increased local efficiencies and effectiveness?.

Program Committee

The Program Committee has presented a variety of educational and advocacy events in the past year

In fall '08 we focused on issues related to the election. While the Voters Service Committee presented an ambitious series of informational meetings about the new Ulster County charter and then candidate nights for those running for the new positions of County Executive and Comptroller, we offered a September pot luck supper program on the national Democratic and Republican conventions and then a November "What Now?" post-election discussion at SUNY New Paltz with two students and their professor. In the new year we determined our consensus on the LWVUS National Popular Vote Compact study - offering both an informational meeting about the Electoral College in February and a consensus meeting in April - and we held a consensus meeting (also in April) on the fate of Ulster County's Golden Hill Health Center, a highly respected but fiscally stretched nursing home. In late March (two weeks before the April 1st deadline for adoption) we offered a program on the state budget featuring our LWVNYS legislative director, Barbara Bartoletti, and the chief of the Gannett News Bureau in Albany, Jay Gallagher.

In the coming year, tentative plans include meetings on a just-adopted state study on consolidating government services, energy and economic development, women as leaders, and other topics of interest to our members. We welcome your suggestions tonight!

Jacki Moriarty and Dare Thompson, co-chairs

Nominations

Officers:

President	2008-2010: Jean McGarry
Vice-President:	2008-2010: Jacki Moriarty
Treasurer	2008-2010: Dare Thompson
Secretary	2009-2011: Emilie Hauser

New Directors

2009-2011

Frank Cassetta
Betty Chin
Karen Goertzel
Evelyn Ness
Lee Ridgway

Continuing Directors

2008-2010:

Cindy Bell
Christine Henning
Irene McInnis
Margaret Sellers
Esther Stickley

Nominating Committee '08-'09:

Susan Hirsch Rita Smith Harriett Straus
Plus two members to be appointed from the Board